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UNCLAS ANKARA 004426

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NP/NE- AKRASS
DOE FOR EM-24 ATHROWER
DOE FOR EM-241 KMENDELSON

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CEKMECE RESEARCH REACTOR CONVERSION AND FUEL RETURN

REF: STATE 154777

1. EXBS Advisor called on the new Turkish Atomic Energy Authority (TAEK) President, Mr. Okay Cakiroglu, on August 6. Cakiroglu assumed these duties this past July. EXBS Advisor the meeting, we raised the Cekmece Nuclear Plants (reftel), noting that DOE is willing to assist in the physical security upgrades to these facilities.

2. Cakiroglu and his colleagues provided the following information in response to the questions posed in reftel:

a. What is the status of TR-2 reactor? Has it been refurbished and will it be restored to full operational capability?

The TR-2 reactor has not been started and will not be started in the near future. TAEK has developed plans to refurbish the reactor, but does not have a timetable for either starting the refurbishment or an estimate of the length of time that it would take to complete the refurbishment.

b. What are the plans for the TR-1? If it is to be restarted what type of fuel will it use and where will the fuel come from?

The plans for TR-1 are for its use for medical research only at this time. In the near future it may also be used for other medical purposes, and that is the extent of use that is planned for this reactor. The fuel being used at this time is from fuel that Turkey has on hand. Turkey has every intention of complying with its agreement with the US to return fuel, both used and unused. While the agreement is to return the spent fuel rods by 2006, Turkey may also have unused fuel rods that it will need to return, since it is not expending fuel at the planned rate.

c. Does Turkey intend to request US assistance with it physical protection upgrades?

Turkey does not intend to request any assistance from the US. Turkey has been working on the list of recommendations provided by IAEA in July 2003 and has remedied all noted deficiency in the physical protection of the facilities.

3. Comment: Given the low level of activity at Cekmece, Cakiroglu did not believe there was reason for more in-depth discussions with us. We are prepared to approach him again if Washington believes it is necessary. End comment.

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